Chapter 2 – Project Initiation

Purpose

The purpose of Project Initiation is to begin to define the overall parameters of a project and establish the appropriate project management and quality environment required to complete the project.

Development of the Project Charter is a pivotal starting point for the project, establishing the project definition that will serve as the foundation for all future efforts. The completion of this process is marked by the Project Kick-off Meeting, in which the Project Manager presents the Project Charter.
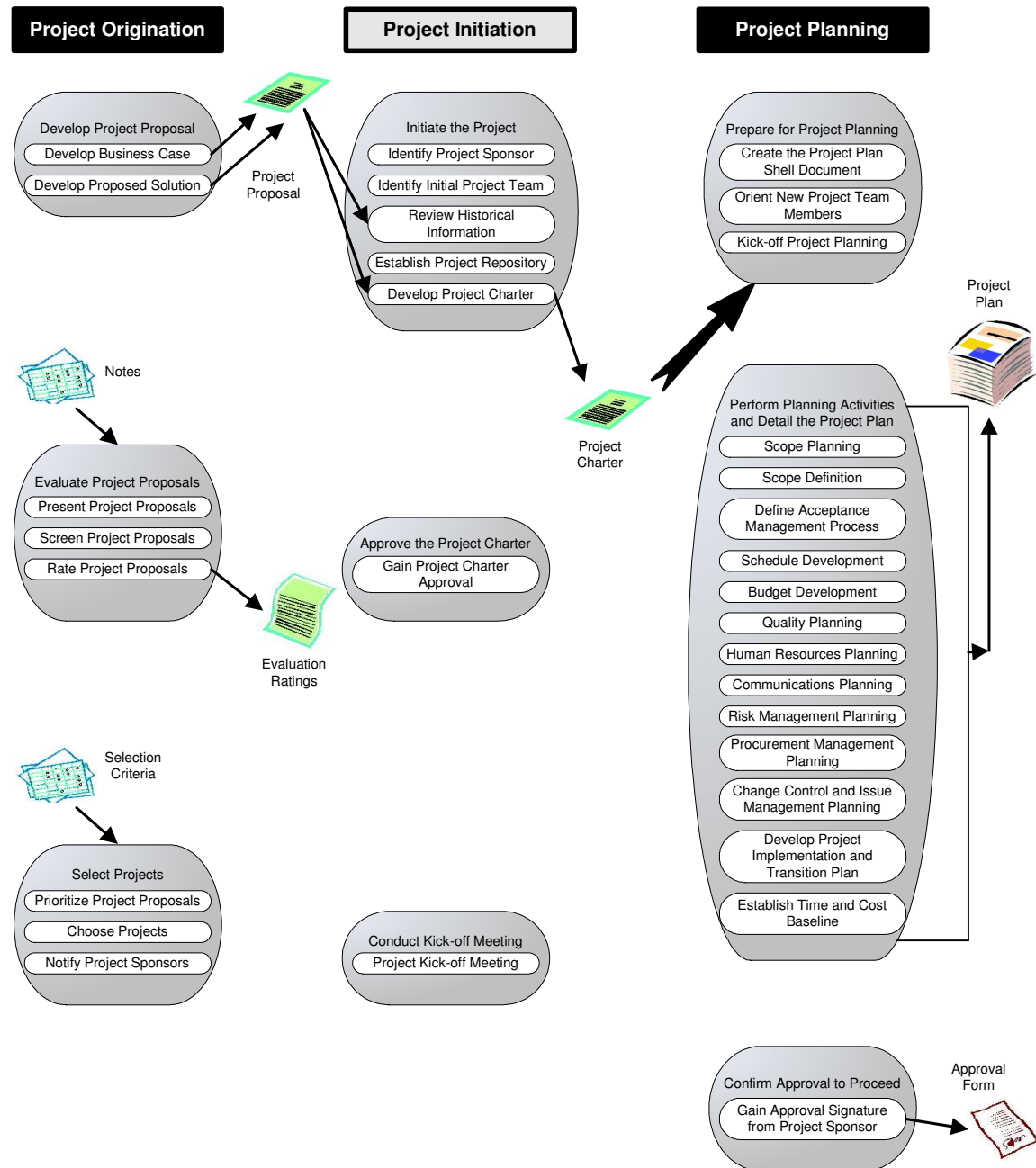
List of Processes

This phase consists of the following processes:

2.1 **Initiate the Project,** where the Project Sponsor and initial Project Team are identified and work with the Project Manager to create the Project Charter.

2.2 **Approve the Project Charter**, where the Project Sponsor formally approves the Project Charter, indicating approval to move forward with the next phase.

2.3 **Conduct the Project Kickoff Meeting**, where the Project Manager and Project Sponsor present the information from the Project Charter to the Project Team and kick off the project.

The following chart illustrates all of the processes and deliverables of this phase in the context of the project management lifecycle.

Figure 2-1 Project Initiation in the Project Management Lifecycle

Project Origination

Develop Project Proposal
- Develop Business Case
- Develop Proposed Solution

Project Proposal

Notes

Evaluate Project Proposals
- Present Project Proposals
- Screen Project Proposals
- Rate Project Proposals

Evaluation Ratings

Selection Criteria

Select Projects
- Prioritize Project Proposals
- Choose Projects
- Notify Project Sponsors

Project Initiation

Initiate the Project
- Identify Project Sponsor
- Identify Initial Project Team
- Review Historical Information
- Establish Project Repository
- Develop Project Charter

Project Charter

Approve the Project Charter
- Gain Project Charter Approval

Conduct Kick-off Meeting
- Project Kick-off Meeting

Project Planning

Prepare for Project Planning
- Create the Project Plan Shell Document
- Orient New Project Team Members
- Kick-off Project Planning

Project Plan

Perform Planning Activities and Detail the Project Plan
- Scope Planning
- Scope Definition
- Define Acceptance Management Process
- Schedule Development
- Budget Development
- Quality Planning
- Human Resources Planning
- Communications Planning
- Risk Management Planning
- Procurement Management Planning
- Change Control and Issue Management Planning
- Develop Project Implementation and Transition Plan
- Establish Time and Cost Baseline

Confirm Approval to Proceed
- Gain Approval Signature from Project Sponsor

Approval Form

List of Roles

The following roles are involved in carrying out the process of this phase. Descriptions of these roles can be found in the Section I Introduction.

- ❑ Project Manager
- ❑ Project Sponsor
- ❑ Project Team Members
- ❑ Customer
- ❑ Customer Representatives
- ❑ Performing Organization

List of Deliverables

Figure 2-2 below lists all Project Initiation tasks and their deliverables (and outcomes). A deliverable is a measurable, tangible, verifiable product. The items in italics are *outcomes*, which are more similar to results versus tangible deliverables.

Figure 2-2 – Project Initiation Deliverables

Processes	Tasks	Deliverables and *Outcomes*
Initiate the Project	Identify Project Sponsor	*Project Sponsor*
	Identify Initial Project Team	*Project Team*
	Review Historical Information	*Information Reviewed*
	Establish Project Repository	Project Repository
	Develop Project Charter	Project Charter
Approve the Project Charter	Gain Project Charter Approval	Project Charter Approvals
Conduct Project Kick-off Meeting	Project Kick-off Meeting	Kick-off Meeting

2.1 Initiate the Project

Purpose

After the project has been approved to move forward, the project is assigned to a Project Team whose first responsibility is to **Initiate the Project**. The Project Manager must work to ensure that the Performing Organization's expectations and all available project information are effectively conveyed to the

> **Roles for this Step**
>
> Project Manager
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> Project Sponsor
>
> Project Team Members

Project Team. This can be done collaboratively with the Performing Organization's management team.

Various areas of the Performing Organization may be required to provide resources to the project in order to complete Project Initiation. The Project Sponsor and Project Manager must determine specific resource requirements and effort estimates, and include them in the charter. The Project Sponsor must communicate with the affected areas of the Performing Organization, proactively gaining agreement and securing the necessary resources. The Project Sponsor must have a general understanding of the amount of effort that will be required to complete the project.

It is imperative that the Project Manager begins to track Project Initiation efforts and communicate status throughout. Items to discuss during status meetings include accomplishments, progress against schedules, work to be done, and any open issues that need resolution. As part of the Communications Plan for the project, a Project Status Report should be prepared and reviewed during Initiation meetings. See Appendix II Project Plan - Communications Management section for more information.

Tasks

2.1.1 Identify the Project Sponsor

If a Project Sponsor has not been identified, the Project Manager must work with Performing Organization management to identify and formally appoint someone to that position. Because the Project Sponsor will champion the project within the organization, secure spending

> **Tasks for this Step**
>
> Identify the Project Sponsor
>
> Identify the Initial Project Team
>
> Review Historical Information
>
> Establish the Project Repository
>
> Develop the Project Charter

authority and resources, and provide support to the Project Manager, it is imperative that he/she be identified as early in the project management lifecycle as possible. Building the relationship between the Project Manager and the Project Sponsor is critical to project success.

2.1.2 Identify the Initial Project Team

The extent to which the Project Team has been defined at this point may vary. At a minimum the manager for the project and certain individuals who can provide support in preparing for the project should be identified.

During Project Origination, a Project Proposal was created. During Project Initiation, the Proposal is reviewed to determine the roles required to staff the project. With the help of appropriate Stakeholders, the Project Sponsor should take the lead in identifying the names of individuals within the Performing Organization who could fill the roles and become Project Team members. Names of the individuals needed to complete Project Initiation tasks will be documented in the Project Charter. In selecting the Project Team, definition of the skills required to perform current tasks as well as skills for future project tasks is needed. Immediate project needs should be met first.

Although the extent of the involvement necessary for each team member may not be known at this time, the Project Manager should provide those who will be involved in Project Initiation with a brief project orientation and review with individual team members their current and future roles on the project. This establishes a baseline understanding of team members' project responsibilities, which will be useful for conducting performance reviews later in the project.

Some agencies hold a meeting at the beginning of Project Initiation, where all potential Stakeholders come together to review the Project Proposal, discuss required roles, and assign Project Team members. In other agencies, establishing a Project Team is a less formal process.

You should choose and use the method to identify your Initial Project Team that will work best for your project and within your organization. Take the opportunity, from the outset, to establish the concept of a Project Team that comprises not only the folks reporting directly to you, but also your Project Sponsor, Customer Representatives, Customer Decision-Makers, and all other players participating in the Project Schedule.

2.1.3 Review Historical Information

Development of the Project Charter will require review of documentation compiled or presented during Project Origination. Materials and information reviewed may include:

❑ The strategic plan, a formal document produced by the Performing Organization that outlines the business goals and direction over a designated number of years

❑ The Project Proposal, including the initial Business Case, which describes the project objectives and how they support the Performing Organization's strategic business direction

❑ Project selection criteria, defining the parameters used in determining whether or not to undertake a project and identifying its business justification and measurements of its success

❑ Information related to federal funding for the project, such as grant applications and advanced planning documents

❑ Information from a previous project similar in size, scope and objectives

❑ Project knowledge and experience of the individuals on the Project Team

2.1.4 Establish the Project Repository

Maintaining information about the project in an organized fashion facilitates new team member transitions and creates a central point of reference for those developing project definition documents. Most importantly, it provides an audit trail documenting the history and evolution of the project.

All relevant project-related material, documents produced, decisions made, issues raised and correspondence exchanged must be captured for future reference and historical tracking. The project repository can be kept as hard copy in a binder or notebook, or as electronic files and email folders, or both, at the discretion of the Project Manager, in accordance with organizational records management policies.

All files related to the project should be grouped by categories within project-specific folders. The structure should be intuitive so that anyone browsing the directory can easily locate needed information. Within the primary hard copy repository, information should be organized in indexed volume(s) to enable easy access. An index should provide reference to

all material maintained electronically (e.g., a file directory or email folder by drive, directory, and filename). The most current hard copy of documentation should be kept in the primary hard copy repository, with earlier versions in the electronic file. By the end of the project, a project repository may include the following materials:

- ❑ Project Proposal and supporting documentation, including the Business Case
- ❑ Project description/definition documents such as the Project Charter and the Project Plan
- ❑ Any working documents or informal documents defining Cost, Scope, Schedule and Quality (CSSQ) of the project
- ❑ Project Schedules (baseline and current)
- ❑ Project financials
- ❑ Project Scope changes and requests log
- ❑ Project Status Reports
- ❑ Team member Progress Reports and timesheets
- ❑ Issues log and details (open and resolved)
- ❑ Project acceptance log by deliverable
- ❑ Products
- ❑ Risk identification/model documentation
- ❑ Contracts and other procurement documents
- ❑ Audit results, if encountered, and Large Project Reporting documentation
- ❑ Correspondence, including any pivotal or decision-making memos, letters, email…etc.
- ❑ Meeting notes, results, and/or actions

The project repository should be available to everyone involved in the project and must, therefore, be considered "public information." It is not advisable to keep sensitive information concerning individuals on the project, such as salaries or evaluations, in the project repository. Some project-related documents may also be regarded as confidential. A confidential project repository should be established in a separate location to secure sensitive information.

> The **North Dakota Open Records Law** requires agencies to generally assume that all are open records unless there is some specific exemption in the open records law (or the agency's laws or federal law) that makes specific information "exempt" or "confidential."
>
> In general, if someone asks for records regarding a project, the agency is required to remove confidential information and disclose the rest of the record. You should contact your agency's legal counsel or the Office of Attorney General for any specific advice regarding these matters.

2.1.5 Develop the Project Charter

The purpose of developing the Project Charter is to provide authority to establish the project, broadly defining its purpose, goals, and objectives. The charter serves as a contract between the Project Team and Project Sponsor. The Project Charter is the first in a series of project definition documents defining the business goals and objectives the project will meet. Information within the Project Charter is provided at a general level that will be further refined in documentation produced during subsequent project activities. The charter also documents the project's mission, history, and background, and lists the benefits to be realized by the Performing Organization as a result of implementing the product or service.

Information compiled during Project Origination is used and applied in the development of the Project Charter. To further understand how the project was selected and to write an effective, comprehensive charter, the Project Manager must work with the Project Sponsor and any appropriate subject matter experts and Stakeholders.

If issues or conflicting project expectations are uncovered while developing the Project Charter, the Project Manager must communicate with Stakeholders to resolve the discrepancies, elevate the issues when appropriate, and obtain consensus. Decisions that impact project expectations significantly should be thoroughly documented.

The Project Charter should minimally contain the following sections:

❑ Background

❑ Objectives

❑ Required Resources for Project Planning or for entire project if known

❑ Constraints

❑ Authority

The Project Charter can also include a preliminary schedule, assumptions, a description of potential project risks, an organizational chart, and a communications plan. The important thing to remember is that the Project Charter is NOT the same as a Project Plan. The Project Charter's purpose is to formally establish the project, and is a much more high-level document than a Project Plan. It should be broad enough so it doesn't need to change (see Appendix I / Template E - Project Charter Template).

Developing the Project Charter is a collaborative effort. Working with the Project Sponsor, the Project Manager should document the objectives that must be achieved in order for the project to be considered a success. These objectives should correlate with the goals and objectives of the project.

> An effective way to define an objective is to complete the following sentence, "The project will be a success if _____".

2.2   Approve the Project Charter

Purpose

Once the Project Charter has been developed, the Project Manager should schedule a meeting to review its contents, secure necessary resources, and gain formal approval.

Approval of the Project Charter is a critical step in Project Initiation because at this point

Roles for this Step
Project Manager
Project Sponsor
Performing Organization

in time, the Project Sponsor may also decide to terminate the project. This "go/no-go" decision may be based upon factors outside the control

of the Project Manager (i.e., the organization may have new priorities that are in direct conflict with the project or increased risk may have been introduced to the project.) Realistically, termination of a project could happen at any point during the life of a project and is something a Project Manager should always keep in mind.

Task

2.2.1 Gain Project Charter Approval

Meeting attendees should always include the Project Sponsor and the members of Performing Organization Management whose resources are affected. Attendees may also include other members of the

Tasks for this Step
Gain Project Charter Approval

Performing Organization who are able to provide resources that will add value to the project. During the meeting, the Project Manager presents the Project Charter for review. *The Resources for the Planning Phase (and for the rest of the project if known) are formally secured by gaining the signatures of the appropriate Performing Organization managers.* If resources are included for the entire project, the Project Sponsor should be informed that the figures are estimates and will be refined as the project progresses.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Project Sponsor will formally approve or reject the charter. Should the Project Sponsor reject the charter, he/ she must provide the reasons for rejection to allow the Project Manager to make necessary adjustments. It is important to note that this acceptance and approval process is ongoing. The Project Manager should review and gain approval from the Project Sponsor and Customer Decision-Makers for all interim deliverables upon their completion. Interim acceptances should streamline final acceptance.

> At this point in the project, you may need to begin acquiring or transitioning the staff necessary to complete the work for the Planning Phase. If so, refer to section3.2.7 Human Resources Planning and section 3.2.10 Procurement Planning in the Planning chapter.

2.3   Conduct Project Kick-Off Meeting

Purpose

When the Project Charter is complete and approved, a Project Kick-off Meeting is conducted. The Project Kick-off Meeting is the event that formally marks the beginning of the project. It is most likely the first opportunity for the Project Sponsor to assemble the entire Project Team to discuss his/her vision of the project, demonstrate support, and

> **Roles for this Step**
>
> Project Manager
>
> Project Sponsor
>
> Project Team Members
>
> Performing Organization

advocate project success. Project Team members are introduced to each other and given the opportunity to discuss their areas of expertise and how they will contribute to the project. The Project Charter is presented by the Project Manager and discussed in an open forum, to foster a mutual understanding of and enthusiasm for the project. At the conclusion of the meeting, Project Team members will understand their "next steps," and will leave the meeting ready to begin work.

Task

2.3.1 Project Kick-Off Meeting

Prior to the meeting, an agenda and a presentation highlighting the contents of the Project Charter should be prepared by the Project Manager. The Project Manager should designate one of the Project Team members as the scribe for the session, to capture decisions,

> **Tasks for this Step**
>
> Project Kick-off Meeting

issues, and action items. The Project Charter and any applicable supporting materials are distributed to attendees for their review. The review of the charter contents ensures that expectations for the project and its results are in agreement. If not already done, the Project Manager must ensure that the Project Sponsor has provided his/her signature on the Project Charter, indicating his/her approval of theb contents of the document. If the Project Sponsor does not approve the charter, he/she must indicate the reason, to allow the Project Manager to make necessary adjustments.

Following the session, the notes and action items should be compiled into meeting minutes and distributed to all attendees (see Appendix I / Template F for a sample agenda).

Depending on the project, you may determine that more than one Project Kickoff Meeting is necessary. The first Kickoff Meeting at this point may include only key team members that will be involved in the Planning Phase, and a subsequent Kickoff Meeting could be held with all team members as described above.

Project Initiation End-of-Phase Checklist

How To Use - Use this checklist throughout Project Initiation to help ensure that all requirements of the phase are met. As each item is completed, indicate its completion date. Use the Comments column to add information that may be helpful to you as you proceed through the project. If you elect NOT to complete an item on the checklist, indicate the reason and describe how the objectives of that item are otherwise being met.

Figure 2-3 Project Initiation End-of-Phase Checklist

Item Description	Completion Date	Comments and/or Reason for Not Completing
Initiate the Project:		
Identify and assign the Project Manager		
Identify and appoint the Project Sponsor		
Identify Project Team Members		
Identify Customer Representatives		
Review historical information		
Document how issues were resolved and decisions made		
Establish the project repository		
Update the repository with all project correspondence		
Review Project Charter template		
Work with Project Sponsor and Project Team to gain consensus on project expectations		
Write the Project Charter document		
Approve the Project Charter		
Conduct Project Charter approval meeting		

Item Description	Completion Date	Comments and/or Reason for Not Completing
Schedule time and location of Kickoff meeting		
Invite appropriate attendees		
Prepare meeting presentation and agenda		
Designate meeting scribe		
Prepare materials for distribution at meeting		
Conduct Kick-off meeting		
Facilitate the Project Kick-off meeting		
Distribute notes to all attendees		

Measurements of Success

The main measurement of success for Project Initiation is the decision to proceed with – or to halt – the project. While in the majority of cases, a well-executed Project Initiation leads to a transition to Project Planning, in some cases the organization is best served by deciding that the project should not continue.

Before the sign-off of the Project Charter, however, the Project Manager can assess how successfully the project is proceeding by utilizing the measurement criteria outlined below in Figure 2-4. More than one "No" answer indicates a serious risk to the continued success of your project.

Figure 2-4 Checklist for Measuring the Success of Project Initiation

Measurements of Success	Yes	No
Do you have a committed, interested and influential Project Sponsor attached to the project?		
Did you verify that your Project Charter reflects the vision of the areas of the Performing Organization affected by/involved in the project?		
Did you identify specific benefits the product or service developed by your project will bring to the Customer?		
Do you have a clear structure for the project repository?		
Do you have approval of the Project Charter, signed by your Project Sponsor authorizing you to proceed to Project Planning, or halting the project?		

Phase Risks / Ways to Avoid Pitfalls

Project Initiation lays the foundation for the rest of the project management lifecycle. In the same way that a faulty foundation will result in an unstable and eventually unusable building, an incomplete or improperly executed Initiation will result in a flawed project.

What are some of the key elements of Project Initiation that require the most attention? The following table identifies processes and tasks that are highlighted in this section.

Figure 2-5 Importance of Project Initiation Process - Avoiding Pitfalls

Process	Task	Why is it Important?
Initiate the Project	Identify Project Sponsor	A project without a Project Sponsor is like a ship without a rudder – no matter how sleek the hull or how tall the masts, it just can't get anywhere useful.
Approve Project Charter	Gain Project Charter Approval	Just how far out on the plank are you willing to walk without formal buy-in from the sponsor?
Conduct Kick-off Meeting	Project Kick-off Meeting	To continue with a ship metaphor, it's important to get everybody on board before setting sail!

PITFALL #1 – No Sponsor, No Champion

In Prepare for the Project, the first imperative is securing a Project Sponsor. Without the Project Sponsor to guide and support the project, the Project Manager has an impossible choice of either trying to take on the responsibilities of a Project Sponsor – for which he has no authority, or trying to secure the commitment of unwilling or uninterested executives – over whom he has little influence.

Having one Project Sponsor who is high enough in the organization to be of help, and interested enough in the outcome to be involved, is ideal. However, in many cases, the organization insists on more than one – usually the managers from the main business functions involved in the project – serving as joint Project Sponsors. If the managers are severely at odds with each other (e.g. about what the project ought to accomplish), in most cases the Project Manager can sit down with the Project Sponsor(s) as early as possible and hammer out a common vision of what the project is supposed to do. Some of the useful questions to ask to gain consensus are:

❑ What are we trying to accomplish? What is the desired outcome?

❑ Who will benefit, and in what ways?

❑ Why is the project important to YOU?

❑ How is it going to change the way people do their work?

❑ How will the organization adjust?

However, when the number of Project Sponsors exceeds two, trouble may be afoot. There will be so many more delays getting everyone to the same place, or chasing everyone down, so many more difficulties achieving a consensus, so many more corrections to deliverables, so many more minds to convince, so many more personalities to please. You'd better add lots of time to your schedule for securing necessary approvals!

The effort you will expend in securing an interested, influential Project Sponsor now will pay dividends throughout the duration of the project. In some organizations, often those with a defined project selection method, projects may only be requested by someone willing to be the Project Sponsor.

PITFALL #2 – INEFFECTIVE KICK-OFF MEETING

The importance of selecting an effective Project Team and writing a comprehensive Project Charter is self evident and well understood. However, the other key, but frequently overlooked or lightly regarded task in Initiate the Project is the kick-off meeting.

When conducted, the kick-off meeting is often wasted in a pro-forma, listless exercise of bringing unwilling participants together and stultifying them with boring recitations of project objectives, replete with industry buzzwords and technical jargon. Instead, you should look at the kick-off meeting as your opportunity to ignite interest in the project, secure enthusiastic participation in crucial activities later on, and set accurate expectations about what the project is – and is not – likely to accomplish.

How? First of all, the kick-off meeting should be a creative, participatory exercise, involving all attendees. Second, it should emphasize and focus on how the project and its eventual product will benefit each attendee. And third, it should be a showcase for the Performing Organization's commitment – and interest – in this project, and your team's enthusiasm for it.

To make it a creative, joint exercise, you may consider asking the attendees to share ideas on why the project is important and how it will benefit the organization as a whole. To involve self-interest, you may also want to ask participants to explain how the project will benefit each of them specifically, making their jobs better, easier or more fulfilling; and if they can't come up with anything, have the Project Sponsor make appropriate suggestions. To showcase executive commitment, develop a draft of "talking points" for the Project Sponsor to use in a statement at the beginning of the kick-off meeting, explaining why the organization is making a significant investment in this project, from both budgetary and human resource standpoints.

Finally, this is a great opportunity to showcase yourself and your team, and demonstrate great enthusiasm for the project, which will be contagious and will set the tone for the activities to come.

PITFALL #3 – CHICKEN BEFORE EGG, SCHEDULE BEFORE PLAN

It is a lucky Project Manager who is not seized by "analysis paralysis" when pressured to develop a Project Schedule and Budget at this stage of the game.

How can I commit myself to an estimate (and let's not kid ourselves – the estimate you do put down will become a commitment, which the Performing Organization will immediately embed in whatever budgetary or strategic plan they are developing) without knowing enough about the project? This paradox is easily resolved if you can estimate as you go along – one phase at a time. Unfortunately, that is a luxury afforded few, if any, Project Managers. The budgeting process demands answers well ahead of the game, and there is no avoiding it. If you must provide preliminary Project Schedule and Budget information, the following information may help.

The one thing that can help at this stage is experience – either personal, or in the form of organizational historical data. If you have been involved in similar projects in the past, you develop a feel for how long things take, and what obstacles – other than product-related – must be overcome and accounted for in the schedule.

However, if you are new to project management, to the Performing Organization, or to the technology, you need to fall back on organizational knowledge. If you are lucky, the organization captured lessons learned from prior projects, and you can find out how long similar efforts have taken. More likely, no such knowledge base exists other than in people's heads, and your Project Sponsor can perform an important service in helping identify and recruit Project Managers who may have been involved in similar efforts. Make sure those efforts were actually successful – after all, you do not want to make the same mistake twice. Ask to see their initial and final Project Schedules. If they don't have either one (or worse, both) move along – anecdotal evidence is of very limited use in real life.

Most of the time, the end date for the project will be pre-defined by some event outside your control – executive commitment, governmental mandate, or some physical constraint. In that case, "backing into" an estimate is eminently reasonable. Walk through the entire project lifecycle backwards, making informed "guesstimates" along the way, and see if you end up at the beginning with today's date.

> Keep in mind that the earliest estimates tend to be on the optimistic side, before reality sets in. Consider your first attempt optimistic. Now make a second, more pessimistic attempt, assuming Murphy's Law. This will provide you with the worst-case scenario. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle.

In other cases, there is a budget limit that must be adhered to. Once again, you can back into your schedule by estimating how many weeks, months or years of effort by a reasonably-sized team the expected budget would support, and from there you can use the industry-standard percentages for product development lifecycles to approximate what your effort is going to be.

Most of all do not obsess over your preliminary schedule if you have included it in your Project Charter. Document carefully all your estimating assumptions, and run it by as many experienced and knowledgeable people as you can – not the least, your Project Sponsor.

PITFALL #4 – PRETENDING NOTHING WILL GO WRONG

The one process that shockingly few organizations engage in despite the fact that it can provide the most "bang for the buck" is risk management, which consists of risk identification, assessment, and mitigation. *These activities should be completed in the Project Planning Phase, but you may wish to include some risks in your Project Charter during Project Initiation.*

Notice, there is nothing here that says, "risk avoidance." You can't avoid risk – stuff will happen, and most of it will negatively impact your project, if you let it. What you can do is anticipate it, and be ready with a solution before the problem arrives. Once again, either your own experience, or organizational knowledge (captured as historical data in a repository, or as knowledge in people's heads) is the key. What obstacles, problems and disasters did other projects run into before? How were they dealt with? What was the impact on the schedule?

Consider every aspect of your project. Ask yourself, what can possibly go wrong? What assumptions am I making that may not be accurate, or consistent? Then, for every risk factor that you identify, you need to determine how it can affect your project.

PITFALL #5 – NOT ENOUGH TALK

Another activity that costs very little, but can provide enormous benefits, is communication. In fact, one of the few success factors consistently cited in analyzing successful projects is frequent and comprehensive communication. Communication keeps all the players in the loop, avoids unpleasant surprises, and builds confidence in project progress and success. Nobody ever complains that they are being told too much, but they usually resent being told too little.

Anyone who will be in any way affected by the product or service that your project will develop must be communicated to at some point, and most likely throughout the project lifecycle.

PITFALL #6 – IS THE PROJECT OFFICIAL?

Finally, you are all done with Initiation. Your Project Charter inspires masses to commit great deeds. You think you are done? Not until you have a signature of someone that matters that certifies that your opinion of your work is justified, and that you have authorization to proceed to the next phase.

Remember that unless you are in the highly unusual situation of being your own boss, you do not have the authority to certify your own work, or the clout to commit resources to continue. And unless you want to go very far out on that proverbial limb, you need to have proof that someone with proper authority – most likely, your Project Sponsor – is on board with what you have done, and what you are about to do.

PITFALL #7 – WE DON'T REALLY NEED TO FOLLOW ALL THESE STEPS, DO WE?

Skipping tasks and their documentation in Project Initiation can cause serious consequences affecting all of the subsequent phases of your project. Project Management (as well as just basic Management) methodologies were developed not because people had nothing better to do with their time, but in response to crises and disasters that resulted precisely from seat-of-the-pants approaches (see PITFALL #5 in Project Planning).

Frequently Asked Questions

What if no one will agree to be the Project Sponsor?

Although no one may have assumed the official role of Project Sponsor, someone secured the funding for this project, and someone appointed you to manage it. Talk to that person, explain the role of the Project Sponsor, and notify him that you will consider him your Project Sponsor unless someone else is identified to fill that position (see Pitfall #1, No sponsor, no champion).

What happens later on if my preliminary time/money estimates are off by 50 to 100 percent?

Accurate estimating takes a lot of effort, knowledge, available historical data, and a bit of luck. Chances are, your estimates are going to be off; the only questions are, by how much, and what will you do about it.

Your lack of accuracy could be due to one or both of the following: (1) you did a lousy job estimating (usually due to lack of historical comparative data) and/or (2) things changed. In the first case, take responsibility for your mistake, use it as a "learning opportunity," and make sure everyone realizes what you are doing. In the second case, make sure everyone's aware of the changes as soon as they occur, and use the change control umbrella to cover you (which you will define in the Planning Phase). Remember – management hates "surprises." It is better (for your career, at least!) to be off by a lot if everyone knows about it well ahead, than to be off by a little – and have it be a total surprise to the decision-makers. In both cases, it behooves you to document your estimating process and assumptions, and reforecast on a regular basis. If an underestimate becomes apparent, identify root causes, define corrective actions and alternatives, and work back with the Project Sponsor to head off any significant degradation of Project Schedule.

How do I justify the initiation time to the Project Sponsor or Customer who just wants it done?

It's called "Customer education." Encourage your Project Sponsor and your key Customers to read (or at least peruse) this **Guidebook**. Explain to them the benefit they will derive from proper planning. Illustrate your arguments by pointing to other projects (hopefully, disastrous) and explaining why they failed (hopefully, due to lack of planning). Seek persuasive allies among their colleagues. And finally, use it as a continuous improvement opportunity: explain what has to be accomplished, and ask for a creative way of getting the same result using some other means. Who knows, they may actually come up with a process improvement that you can use as a best practice later on (see Pitfall #7 for more details).

What can you do if the Performing Organization doesn't recognize the importance of project management or feels that they can do it better?

This is a kind of variation on the theme of the previous question. You can either try to persuade the folks that it's the right thing to do, or lead by example and just do it the right way. It is unlikely that everyone doesn't understand project management; seek out people with similar ideas, and have them bolster your arguments. Seek assistance from the EPMO with justifications and examples of successful projects done right. Brandish this *Guidebook* and follow the practices it advocates.

Is the Project Manager expected to perform all of the tasks required of the role? Can some tasks be delegated in whole or in part?

Great question! Management means, "getting work done through others." Delegation is one of its principal tenets. Depending on the size of the project, the Project Manager may be physically unable to perform some of the duties outlined in this book. For example, take new team member orientation. Ideally, the Project Manager would spend a chunk of time with every team member, inculcating proper disciplines and techniques. However, what if the Project Team comprises hundreds of members? Project Team Leaders must be identified to take on those responsibilities. But remember, it is still the Project Manager's responsibility to verify that delegated tasks are being executed correctly.

The most succinct way to answer this question is this: the Project Manager must do whatever it takes to have every task done right, on time, and within budget. Whether you accomplish this by sitting on the beach and firing off occasional e-mails (improbable), or by spending all your waking moments in the office (undesirable), you are still doing a fine job.

What do you do if the Project Sponsor doesn't fulfill his/her role to the level of satisfaction expected by the Project Manager?

The first thing to remember is it doesn't pay to fight your Project Sponsor. The Project Sponsor is your principal ally and benefactor. Reason, persuasion and education are the way to go.

First, make sure your Project Sponsor knows that you are both trying to accomplish the same goal: to solve a business issue with the product of the project. Second, make sure the Project Sponsor understands – and agrees with – the approach the project is taking. Finally, once you have established commonality of interests, you can gently educate your Project Sponsor on the responsibilities of the position, and if their understanding differs, try to come to terms to which you both agree. Always argue from the benefit standpoint, explaining how a particular action on her part will benefit the project – and eventually the Project Sponsor.

However, what does the PM do if the 'positive' approach isn't working? If the Project Sponsor continues to not fulfill his/her role, the project sponsor needs to know that they too are responsible for the project. You as the

Project Manager are not the only person who is to be held professionally accountable for the project. There needs to be a clear understanding that it is the Project Sponsor's project and the Project Manager is there to help the project succeed. If project success becomes threatened because of this situation, the Project Manager may need to escalate this as an issue to the Project Steering Committee (if one exists) or through other appropriate channels in the organization.